

Allen-Scott Report

Defense Critics To Launch Probe

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Mr. Allen

WASHINGTON — The House Armed Services Committee is going to launch a full-scale investigation of U.S. military preparedness and defense strategy.

Selection of Representative Porter Hardy, D-Va., one of the most respected military experts in the House, to head the special congressional inquiry will be announced later this week.

Representative Hardy was picked for this controversial assignment by Chairman Mendel Rivers, D-S.C., of the House Armed Services Committee, after congressional leaders and other members of this group were consulted.

Agreeing with Rivers' deep concern over the effect Secretary McNamara's defense policies are having on overall U.S. military capabilities, the House leaders not only gave the Hardy probe their blessing but promised subpoena power and all the money needed to carry it through.

The special inquiry was triggered by the alarming findings in a study conducted for the House Armed Services Committee by 17 defense experts, most of them retired officers who formerly held high commands.

Prepared under the direction of Retired General Bernard A. Schriever, former commander of the Air Force Systems Command, the study warned that the Soviet Union appears to be succeeding in its effort to gain "strategic military superiority over America."

This highly critical report and the resulting backstage congressional discussions made it clear that Secretary McNamara would be the probers' main target.

In their 100-page, year-long study, these defense critics flatly charged that McNamara's defense policies were helping the Russians "by slowing down the U.S. side of the arms race."

Representative Rivers is urging the sweeping military preparedness investigation was just as critical of McNamara's policies.

During one meeting in Speaker John McCormack's office, the veteran committee chairman warned that McNamara's decision prohibiting the development of space weapons "is an open invitation for the Soviets to produce the ultimate nuclear blackmail weapon."

In support of his charge, Rivers showed the House leaders a secret committee study indicating Russia had used one space weapon to knock out "two U.S. and one British satellite."

The study disclosed by Rivers also warned of a Soviet "orbital bomb," stating:

"That the Soviet Union would dare to risk the development of orbital bombs is at least credible in view of experience during the Cuban missile crisis. Surprise would be complete, since the U.S. has no way of determining if an orbital vehicle is bearing a nuclear weapon."

"The Soviet Union could hint that certain orbiting craft were capable of immobilizing our ICBM system. Combined with a means of countering the American Polaris missile force, this might be the ultimate nuclear blackmail."

"In the Soviet Union, space programs are run entirely by military men with military goals foremost in mind. Several official Soviet sources claim explicitly that they now possess a monstrous new space weapon."

The Hardy probers will be authorized to "fully explore the administration's policy of deferring the deployment of an anti-missile system pending an appeal to Moscow by Ambassador Llewellyn Thompson for an agreement on a mutual moratorium on such a defense."

House Armed Services Committee investigators already have gathered disturbing evidence that "The Russians are several years ahead of the U.S. in the deployment of an anti-missile system."

One of their findings states: "Although there is a difference of opinion within the U.S.

intelligence community on the type of missiles being employed by the Russians, some experts believe the Soviets are probably deploying an anti-missile missile capable of producing X-ray effects."

In seeking subpoena powers for the Hardy committee, Representative Rivers explained to the House leaders that these were necessary to (1) protect military officers who testify against McNamara policies, and (2) obtain several suppressed defense studies.

According to Rivers, these studies clearly show that McNamara's reducing U.S. strategic nuclear forces so the Soviet Union can obtain nuclear parity with this country.

One of the Hardy probers' first assignments will be a study of how transfer of divisions to Vietnam from the "strategic reserve" has affected U.S. worldwide preparedness.

Among persons that will be called to testify in the investigation are:

Secretary McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General William Westmoreland, General Curtis LeMay, retired, and General Thomas Powers, retired, former Air Force chiefs of staff, General Schriever, retired, and Dr. Edward Teller, the nuclear physicist.